

The Daily Charge

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Telling the MND-Baghdad Story

Saturday, March 24, 2007



(Photo by Spc. Nathan Hoskins 1st ACB Public Affairs)

Salute!

After refueling the AH-64D Apache attack helicopter, Spc. Leighton Johnson (left), and Pfc. Nicholes Cota, both of Co. E, 1st Bn., 227th Avn. Regt., 1st ACB, 1st Cav. Div., salute the pilots before they exit the forward arming and refueling point at Baghdad International Airport. (See story page 4)

COP Battle stands up as part of 'surge'

By Spc. L.B. Edgar,
7th MPAD

AL FURAT, Baghdad - Building something out of nothing is part of the mission for the more than 20,000 additional Soldiers participating in Operation Fardh Al Qanoon.

The latest troops to put boots on the streets of Iraq's capital are the infantrymen of the 1st Infantry Division's Company B, 1st Battalion, 28th Infantry Regiment, 4th

Brigade Combat Team, who are setting up shop in the district of Al Furat.

Since getting Soldiers out into the community is a priority of the latest plan to secure Baghdad, the Soldiers of Company B are building their new home from scratch - Combat Out Post Battle, said Capt. Brian Ducote, the company commander.

"It's primarily where we're going to have our base of operations," said the native of Dunwoody, Ga. "These Combat

Outposts are important because it gets us out with the people where we can get to know them more. It's easier to patrol. You can respond quicker to incidences."

COP Battle will serve as a planning center for coalition forces working to improve security in the local community. Unlike many forward operating bases that tend to remove Soldiers from the reality of

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Building something out of nothing

Battle

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Iraq, the COP will allow troops to better understand the area's culture and people, Ducote explained.

Though COP Battle is currently a work in progress and the amenities are near non-existent, the conditions will improve as the structure comes together, Ducote said.

The first priority of the COP is always force protection. Approximately 350 Alaska barriers, which are protective concrete walls, will protect troops from incoming threats, said 1st Sgt. Gerald Cornell, the company first sergeant.

"When we're done we'll have 12-foot walls around the entire (COP) with a couple of entrances," said the native of Moscow, Idaho.

As the COP stands up one concrete barrier at a time, the Soldiers are living in tents, a makeshift motor pool houses their vehicles and an stark tactical operations center is in the works, Cornell said.

"It will be austere at first but every day we're taking steps to improve it. It will really be just like a mini FOB out here," said 1st Lt. Scott Hutchison, the company

executive officer who is from Dear Park, Texas. "We're here until the job gets done."

Despite the living conditions, the Soldiers are prepared for the challenges of living in Baghdad outside of the heavily

fortified FOBs most Soldiers are accustomed to occupying, Cornell said.




"It's the infantry. That's the nature of the beast. That's what we do," Cornell explained. "They're ready to do what they need to for their country."



(Photo by Spc. L.B. Edgar 7th MPAD)

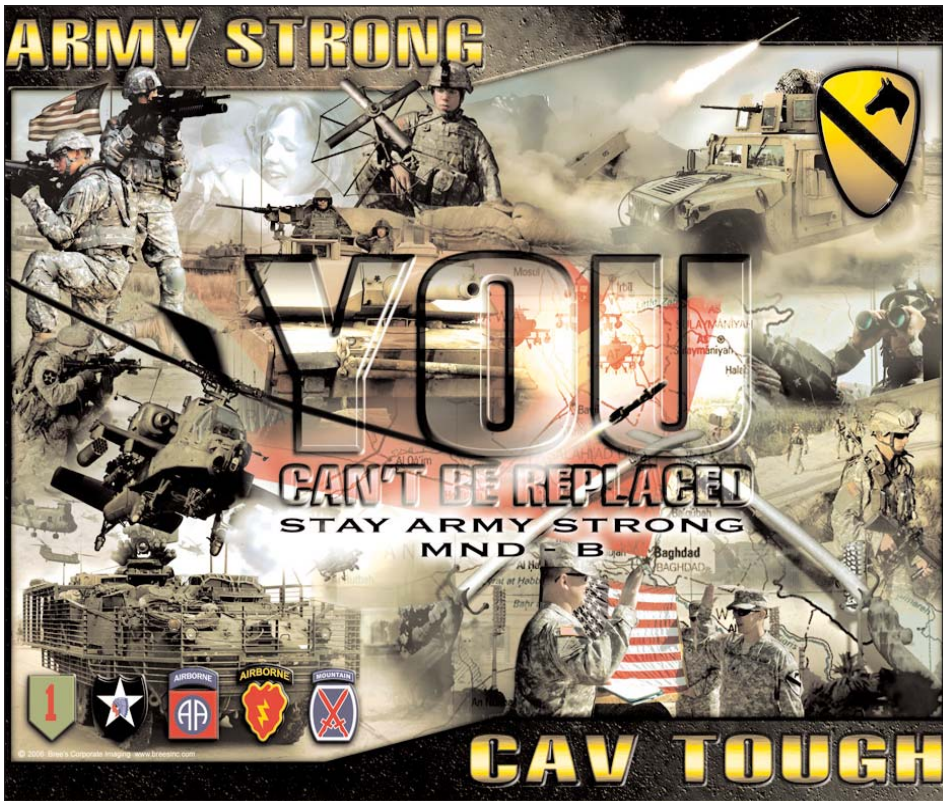
Soldiers of Company B, 1st Battalion, 28th Infantry Regiment, 4th Brigade Combat Team, 1st Infantry Division unload sand bags on Combat Outpost Battle in the Baghdad neighborhood of Al Furat March 18.



Iraq 3-Day Weather Report			
	Today	Tomorrow	Monday
	High: 77 Low: 59	High: 73 Low: 61	High: 77 Low: 54

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NP's seize weapons caches

By Maj. Kirk Luedeke
4-1 Inf. PAO

BAGHDAD - Iraqi National Police entered the Al Houda and Al Aqsa mosques during a daytime operation in a southern district of the Iraqi capital March 18.

The National Police received tips from neighborhood residents of insurgent activities being conducted at the mosques.

Iraqi security forces seized two caches of weapons, munitions and bomb-making materials at each mosque. A total of five people were detained in connection with suspected anti-Iraqi activities and are being held by the police for questioning.

Six AK-47 assault rifles and a shotgun were found at the Al Aqsa mosque, along with small caliber ammunition and bomb-making materials.

Two AK-47s, and several mortar rounds and bomb-making material

were confiscated in the Al Houda mosque.

The 1st Battalion of the 7th Brigade National Police entered the mosques, while MND-B forces provided the outer cordon for the operation. No MND-B troops entered the mosque or immediate premises.



(Iraqi National Police photo)

Weapons, ammunition and bomb making materials seized by National Police at the Al Aqsa mosque March 18.

Baghdad in Brief

Wolverine troops discover cache of weapons

MUSHADAH, Iraq - A cache of weapons was found by Multi-National Division - Baghdad Soldiers near here March 22.

Soldiers of the 1st Squadron, 89th Cavalry Regiment "Wolverines" of the 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 10th Mountain Division (Light Infantry) discovered the cache in an area known as the "mixing bowl" due to its position at the junctures of three major high-ways.

The cache contained a wooden crate and two ammunition cans full of AK-47 ammunition, 100 blasting caps, eight rocket-propelled grenade rounds, a dozen 122mm mortar rounds, 46 60mm mortar rounds, six fuse tips, two mortar tailfins, a barrel for an RPK machine gun, 200 primers, two burlap bags each containing 50 mortar charges, and two M6 mortar fuse tips.

"Discovery of caches like this impedes the terrorists' ability to harm coalition forces and Iraqi civilians," said Maj. Web Wright, a spokesman for the 2nd BCT. "Indirect fire by terrorist forces often injures innocent Iraqis. The Soldiers' vigilance in finding caches like this protects not only themselves, but the Iraqis as well."

The cache was destroyed by an explosive ordnance disposal team.



Refueling point keeps birds airborne

**By 1st Lt. Morgan Wolff
1st ACB**

CAMP TAJI, Iraq - When you pull up to the gas pump, there are friendly faces waiting to service your vehicle. No need to get out, they'll take care of everything. Tip? No need, they love what they do and wouldn't hear of it. Their goal is to not waste any of your precious time and get you back on the "road" as soon as possible.

This is a rare occurrence in the U.S., but at Baghdad International Airport this happens 24 hours a day, 7 days a week due to the hard work of a few Soldiers from the 1st Air Cavalry Brigade, 1st Cavalry Division.

Company E, 1st Battalion, 227th Aviation Regiment, assumed responsibility for operations at the BIAP forward arming and refueling point "Crazy Horse" on Oct. 27, 2006. Since then, they have pumped a colossal two million gallons of fuel into coalition aircraft.

Along with hitting the two million gallon mark so quickly, Co. E has serviced over 7,500 coalition aircraft since taking

over the mission at BIAP, said Killeen, Texas, native Capt. Michael Martin, commander of Co. E, 1-227th Avn.

To put that into perspective, Company E has serviced more than the equivalent of all the U.S. Army aircraft in very little time, he said.

Twenty eight Soldiers are split between two 12-hour shifts seven days a week to provide around the clock fuel distribution to coalition aircraft operating within the Baghdad area of operations.

The Crazy Horse FARP is the nucleus of air operations within Baghdad which is the epicenter of Operation Iraqi Freedom. For this reason, quality control and surveillance of petroleum management operations there are second to none, said Martin.

The serviceability of fuel trucks and associated FARP equipment are of the utmost importance, he said.

Each day, prior to any fuel being issued, samples are taken and tests are conducted to ensure quality levels meet or exceed Army aviation standards. This is especially important as the very lives of coalition pilots and those of their support-

ed ground units depend on it.

Even a minor oversight could mean disaster for an aircraft and the mission to which it was assigned. Because of these concerns, Soldiers receive daily safety briefings and are frequently quizzed on their knowledge of emergency battle drills and safety procedures in the event of a catastrophe.

"A lot of people don't realize what high standards we have to hold for our fuel. We really push ourselves to make sure [the pilots] get the best quality of fuel," said Birmingham, Ala., native Pfc. Kristina Hunter, a fueler for Co. E.

Additionally, highly trained and motivated NCOs provide first line supervision of all operations at the FARP, said Martin.

The types of aircraft serviced at the Crazy Horse FARP are far more diverse than anything the Soldiers saw during training conducted prior to deployment.

Within only a few days of operating the Crazy Horse FARP, Soldiers were exposed to a variable menagerie of helicopters.

"We fill up anybody that comes in here - British [Royal Air Force], Navy, Marines and birds from all the different units over here. You come into BIAP to get fuel - we'll take care of you," said Hunter.

On average, 14,000 gallons of fuel are issued to 50 aircraft each day, with busy days surpassing 100 aircraft and over 26,000 gallons.

At the current rate, it is estimated that nearly six million gallons of fuel will be issued to over 21,000 coalition aircraft by the end of the 1st Cavalry Division's current deployment, said Martin.

The importance of combat aviation missions to the overall success of coalition operations throughout the Iraqi theater is clear.

"This is vital to everybody in theater because mobility is the important thing over here - the ability to transport troops, medical supplies, medical personnel [and] fire support - fast," said Hunter. "We provide these helicopters with the fuel to get them where they need to go and it makes a big impact all across the board."



(Photo by Spc. Nathan Hoskins 1st ACB Public Affairs)

Pfc. Nicholes Cota, a transportation management coordinator for Co. E, 1st Bn., 227th Avn. Regt., 1st ACB, 1st Cav. Div., watches the fuel gauge for the AH-64D Apache attack helicopter while refueling at the forward arming and refueling point at Baghdad International Airport.

Visual aides aid Soldier safety

By Spc. Nathan Hoskins
1st ACB Public Affairs

CAMP TAJI, Iraq - The 1st Air Cavalry "Warrior" Brigade, 1st Cavalry Division was not satisfied with the old safety posters taped and tacked to their walls; they wanted to go deeper.

Traverse City, Mich., native Col. Dan Shanahan, the commander of 1st ACB, requested a new poster to replace the old graph which was used to show risk during a deployment because there were some inherent flaws in it, he said.

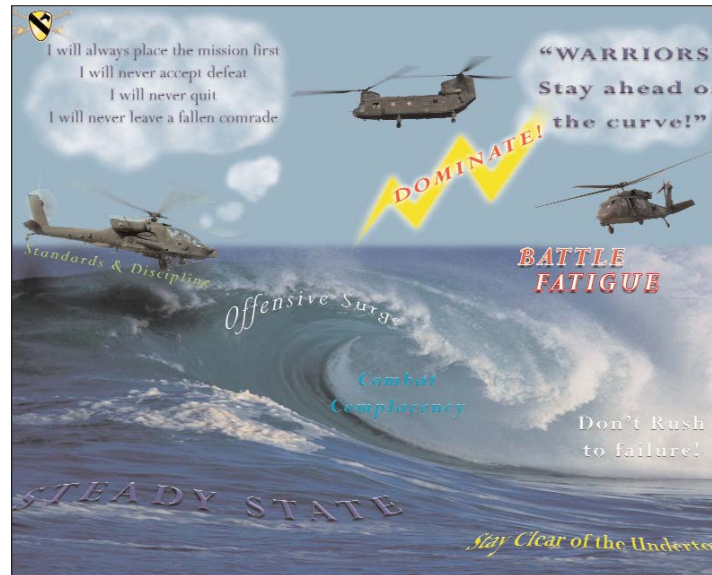
The old graph showed peaks of risk and danger at the beginning and end of the deployment, but a downward trend in the second and third quarters of the deployment, said Shanahan.

"As units get complacent, potentially, at the end of a tour, there is a rise in the number of accidents - with the tenth month being one of the highest months of incidents anyone has involving catastrophic accidents," he said.

"I didn't want to have a mental picture for our troopers that there was going to be any decrease in risk level in relationship to what we're doing for our combat operations," continued Shanahan.

Additionally, the graph only showed a small portion of the deployment cycle, said Carlisle, Pa., native Lt. Col. Michael Shenk, the commander of 3rd Battalion, 227th Aviation Regiment, 1st ACB.

"These charts falsely end at 12 months. What we've got



(Photo by Spc. Nathan Hoskins 1st ACB Public Affairs)

The new safety poster used by the 1st ACB, 1st Cav. Div., commissioned by Col. Dan Shanahan, commander of the 1st ACB, was created to provoke a deeper sense of safety in Soldiers. Shanahan felt the old poster, a graph with a curved line on it, did not accurately represent the different aspects of risk and danger during the current deployment.

to do is ... start forming our strategy for reintegration phase. That risk curve, where it ends kind of high, it stays up there for like 90 days because the motorcycles come back out ... the drinking comes back out ...," he said.

The new poster uses a wave cresting as a metaphor for multiple catch phrases found throughout it.

This gives safety a sense of immediacy, Cherry Hill, N.J., native Capt. Nick Strasser, the 1st ACB trial counsel.

One of the phrases is "stay clear of the undertow."

"The undertow in a deployed environment can easily grab someone who is not paying attention. Keeping a keen eye on problems below the surface is impor-

tant to success in war," said Strasser.

"Each word on there means something different to somebody else," said Shenk.

"I think what the new chart tries to do is recognize the fact that composite risk management is a straight line ... it doesn't change. The outcome of your efforts creates that [curve]," said Shenk.

Another reason the new poster was created was to catch Soldiers' attention.

Anything Soldiers can bring to the table, that is not routine or the same as years past, will have its desired effect to make Soldiers think about safety, said Shenk.

Although accidents are a part of life, Shanahan does not believe that Soldiers are out to do harm.

"I think Soldiers get up in

the morning, look themselves in the mirror and say 'I'm going to have a great day. I'm going to [work hard] for my formation.' But that doesn't always happen. It doesn't happen because they don't read all the signs. Maybe they are battle fatigued, maybe they are rushing to failure ...," he said.

Rushing to failure is another phrase on the new safety poster.

"One of the common problems of the deployed environment is trying to do too much too quickly. Staying Disciplined and focusing on standards are important tools in not rushing to failure and winding up under the wave," said Strasser.

Soldiers who practice unsafe behaviors can directly and indirectly impact the effort in Iraq, said Shanahan.

"If we're on our [backs] because we've got some problems here or there, it's going to deter from the mission of the ground guys. That's unacceptable in the 1st Air Cavalry Brigade," he said.

Standards and discipline are important to keeping safe while deployed, thus its position on the poster.

"Standards and discipline are two of the foundations of a successful deployment and a successful ride on a wave. Standards allow each Soldier to know very clearly what is expected of them.... Like the diagram suggests, standards and discipline lead to a position to be successful - the top of the wave," said Strasser.